

COUNTY NAME: Colusa

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

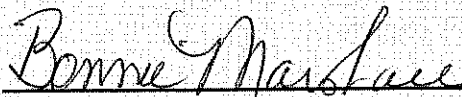
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I hereby certify that County Board of Supervisors was briefed regarding the contents of this Plan addendum prior to submittal.



County Welfare Director's
Signature

Bonnie Marshall
Printed Name

December 12, 2006
Briefing Date

This plan addendum is submitted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10534.

1) County Goals

After reviewing the county's existing CalWORKs County Plan, please provide a general description of how the county will meet the goals defined in Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 10540, while taking into consideration the work participation requirements of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

The goals of W&I Code Section 10540 are the following:

- 1) Reduce child poverty in the State;
- 2) Reduce dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reduce out-of-wedlock births; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families;
- 3) Meet the requirements of federal law while avoiding unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.

A. General description of how the county will meet the goals of W&I Code 10540

Choices Curriculum; Team Case Management. CalWORKs children's parents and caretakers will continue to receive training, coaching, and practical experience through Welfare to Work activities. Activities are provided through the local Colusa County One-Stop Partnership (our county's Workforce Investment Agency), Colusa County Behavioral Health Services, Colusa County Office of Education's Regional Occupational Program and Children's Services division, and Yuba Community College. Additional soft-skills-building activities have been enhanced, and they will be threaded throughout the entire period of clients' participation in WtW activities to the greatest possible extent. A new program entitled *Choices*, which is offered in both English and Spanish languages, focuses on building skills for employability, self-sufficiency, and personal growth. Soft-skills instruction includes components in budgeting, physical and emotional health and nutrition, parenting, goal-setting, and personal planning. Training sessions conducted by Behavioral Health Services staff is included in the *Choices* curriculum. BHS presents mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse instruction within the context of parent education.

We are initiating a new strategy to more fully develop the caseworker-client relationship: a *Team* approach to case management. Employment and Training Workers are now teamed with One-Stop job counselors and with Eligibility Workers. To develop and maintain the team's effectiveness, additional staff development is being emphasized, with extra training through One-Stop resources as well as through U.C. Davis Extension's Center for Human Services instructors.

2) Participation Improvement

Please describe what immediate and long-range actions the county will take to improve the federal work participation rate (WPR) among CalWORKs applicants and recipients. At a minimum, describe how the county will address increased participation in the areas listed below. When responding, provide a detailed description of the policy or strategy in each program area, the anticipated outcome that will result in program improvements, the percentage of families affected, and how success will be determined. Please note that if a county is already using a particular strategy that is successful, a description of that strategy is sufficient.

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Orientation Appointment Reminders; *Work Bucks* Incentives; Swift Response to Missed Appointments. We will continue to provide Orientation individually with clients, not in a group, to ensure our clients are processing the information to the fullest extent possible. At the same appointment, the ETW conducts the Appraisal interview with the client. We attribute our relative success with this strategy to the personalization of Orientation information. A new strategy we have initiated is to improve the likelihood of clients showing up for their Orientation and Appraisal meeting with the ETW. When newly created case files are forwarded to the CalWORKs supervisor from Reception, she now reviews each file to ensure that Orientation appointment letters have been sent. We recently began having our ETWs make personal contact with clients the day before their appointment for Orientation to stress its importance. Another new policy we have initiated is to mail reminder postcards (similar to dentist's or doctor's office appointment reminder cards) three days before appointment dates. ETWs and One-Stop Employment Counselors will immediately phone those clients who miss their Orientation and Appraisal appointment. If clients cannot be reached by phone, the ETW will visit the client at home. For cases in which the client has already established a positive working relationship with another agency's worker (e.g., One-Stop Counselor, Behavioral Health Services counselor, Eligibility Worker), that worker will accompany the ETW on the home visit. Clients whose schedules allow them to attend the new *Choices* class are referred there as one of their initial activities. A similar reminder and follow-up strategy is employed to increase participation in *Choices*.

In collaboration with the One-Stop, we are initiating a "*Work Bucks*" incentive program. Clients will receive *Work Bucks* for positive attendance, for successful participation in an activity, and for activity completion. Depending on the activity, clients can earn *Work Bucks* each week. *Work Bucks* are in the form of coupons for local retail goods and services (excluding, of course, alcohol, tobacco, entertainment, and gambling).

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We anticipate cutting our no-show rate for Orientation in half – instead of a 30% no-show rate, we anticipate a 15% no-show rate. We anticipate cutting our no-show rate for other activities in half – instead of a 25% to 30% no-show rate, we anticipate a 10% to 15% no-show rate.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Quantitative assessments are made by simple manual counts of attendance. ETWs will continue to enter activity data in our ISAWS Welfare to Work automation system. Attendance Reports are forwarded to ETWs weekly from our activity providers, including *Choices* instructors and presenters. Qualitative assessments will continue to be made through the "Progress Notes" section on our Attendance Reports as well as through weekly Inter-Agency Case Managers' staffing meetings. Please also refer to Page 8, Section H.

C. Achieving full engagement by individuals who are required to participate, and who are partially participating, not participating, or are between activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

ESL/Computer/Math/Writing/Verbal Skills Labs, Work Bucks Incentives, Team Case Management. As a new policy to help fill the gaps between activities – for example, when R.O.P. or Yuba Community College classes are observing extended holiday or inter-semester/quarter/session breaks – all case managers (Welfare to Work, Eligibility, One-Stop, Behavioral Health, R.O.P.) will encourage clients to participate in skills upgrades at the One-Stop, which remains open. These skills upgrades will focus on each client's unique challenges – for example, improved English language fluency, mathematics, computer literacy, written and verbal skills, test-taking, interviewing. Case Managers' meetings will review and assess clients' progress. We have developed a new strategy utilizing *Work Bucks*. *Work Bucks* incentives will be promoted to encourage positive attendance. For those clients not participating regularly, case managers will make home visits in an effort to prevent sanctioning the client. In the past, ETWs have been making these home visits, with limited success. Our new policy is to include another case manager (Behavioral Health, One-Stop, R.O.P., Eligibility Worker) in the home visiting strategy. In many cases, other case managers have an easier time establishing trust with specific clients and we hope to capitalize on this utilizing our new *Team* approach to case management.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

Clients should benefit from their participation in activities by increasing their inter-personal skills, by developing the ability to plan and carry out those plans, by developing new acquaintances and resources, and by improving their employment skills and employability. As clients become more familiar with personal interactions (those with staff as well as those with peers attending the same activities), we anticipate they will become more comfortable in attending. Our history is that approximately 50% of our clients do not remain in activities to which they are assigned. We anticipate cutting this in half over time.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Our small Welfare to Work population and our small staffing level (two Employment and Training Workers) preclude categorical separation of Early Engagement, Re-Engagement, and Sanction Reduction strategies. Quantitative assessments are made by simple manual counts of attendance. ETWs will continue to enter activity data in our ISAWS Welfare to Work automation system. Attendance Reports are forwarded to ETWs weekly from our activity providers, including *Choices* instructors and presenters. Attendance Reports do not differentiate between persons with respect to their status as new participant, on-going participant, or conciliating participant – because we have a small Welfare to Work population, there is relatively little separation of clients into activities based upon their participant status. Qualitative assessments will continue to be made through the "Progress Notes" section on our Attendance Reports as well as through weekly Inter-Agency Case Managers' staffing meetings. Please also refer to Page 8, Section H.

D. Providing activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Inter-Agency Case Managers' Meetings; Child Care. Recent inter-departmental staff development meetings have and will continue to focus on case managers' interpretations and analyses of their clients' behaviors. For example, we are replacing the term "barriers" with the term "challenges," and we are encouraging workers to do the same with their clients. We feel that framing the many predicaments our clients face more positively will, in time, increase both staff and clients' motivation to succeed. New staff development provided by professionals will focus on this concept. For example, a common example of failed participation concerns child care. Until now, Welfare to Work staff has met monthly with our Child Care Alternative Payment Provider (APP), the Colusa County Office of Education, to review the appropriateness of the family's placement in Stage 1 or Stage 2 child care. We are implementing a new strategy of expanding the scope of these meetings to include ETWs and APP caseworkers problem-solving on families who stopped attending WtW activities

because of difficulty with child care. We are also instituting a plan with our APP in which the APP caseworker will notify the ETW as soon as the APP determines a client has stopped utilizing child care. Rather than merely accepting that the client does not have access to adequate child care, the ETW/One-Stop Case Manager/EW team will work with the client to develop a workable solution and plan to the child care challenge.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We anticipate a reduction in our sanctioned cases of from 20% to 50% over time, given the cumulative effects of re-educating clients and staff.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Our small Welfare to Work population and our small staffing level (two Employment and Training Workers) preclude categorical separation of Early Engagement, Re-Engagement, and Sanction Reduction strategies. Please also refer to Page 8, Section H.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Earlier identification and Intervention; *Team* case management. Efforts to make personal contact with non-compliant individuals will be increased through earlier identification of non-compliance. Weekly inter-agency case managers' staff meetings that focus on each Welfare to Work client rather than focusing only on new clients should enhance early identification of client challenges. Further, increased communication with child care APP staff should also facilitate early identification of clients' non-compliance. Earlier identification followed by expanded efforts to meet with clients, preferably at the clients' homes, should provide case management *Teams* with more information and tools to help clients successfully resolve their challenges. Our former policy was for ETWs to make up to three attempts to visit with clients in their homes. In the majority of these attempted home visits, clients were either not at home or declined to come to the door. In addition to earlier identification, our home-visiting policy has been expanded to include other agencies' case managers in home-visiting. We feel it is necessary for at least one case manager to develop a trusted working relationship with each client. By approaching our clients as an inter-agency, inter-disciplinary team, we hope to succeed in establishing a trust relationship with more of our clients.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

Continued client engagement in customized service plans should optimize success in achieving self-sufficiency. Client success in any Welfare to Work activity, federal or non-federal, will increase client employability, thereby increasing prospects of achieving CalWORKs "leaver" status. Through earlier identification and intervention and through *Team* case management, we anticipate serving 95% of those individuals in our caseload who are sanctioned or noncompliant, reengaging half of them in their welfare to work plan activities, thus increasing their families' prospects for self-sufficiency.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Our small Welfare to Work population and our small staffing level (two Employment and Training Workers) preclude categorical separation of Early Engagement, Re-Engagement, and Sanction Reduction strategies. Please also refer to Page 8, Section H.

F. Other activities designed to increase the county's federal WPR?

Paid Work Experience. We will initiate a program of Paid Work Experience. Until now, we have provided for Unpaid Work Experience in our contract with the Colusa County One-Stop. We are developing a new strategy in which successful participation in an Unpaid Work Experience will result in client transition to a Paid Work Experience. Of a WEX site potential of thirty offices, we currently have only six WEX placements. We anticipate placements will increase with the initiation of a Paid WEX activity.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy):

We have some anecdotal evidence that some agencies have resisted WEX placements out of concern that unpaid workers lack motivation to show up for work. One-Stop staff is optimistic that expanding to a program of Paid WEX will facilitate site recruitment.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We hope to double the number of clients we have in WEX placements as a result of 1) providing *Work Bucks* incentives for successful participation in Unpaid WEX, 2) providing improved case management activities, and 3) offering Paid WEX placements for clients successfully completing an Unpaid WEX assignment.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

Anecdotal evidence gathered in Inter-Agency Case Managers' meetings will assess the quality of expanding our WEX program to include Paid WEX assignments. Numbers will be easily captured in raw case counts. Our small Welfare to Work population allows us the luxury of using raw counts in addition to automated case counts, increasing accuracy. Please also refer to Page 8, Section H.

G. Please provide a description of how the county will collaborate with local agencies, including, but not limited to, local workforce investment boards, community colleges, universities, adult schools and regional occupational centers/programs that provide activities that meet federal work participation requirements and provide participants with skills that will help them achieve long-term self-sufficiency. For each individual agency, responses should include elements such as how information is shared or will be shared, ongoing or planned contracts, ongoing meetings established, etc.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Workforce Investment Board

Our biggest collaborator is, and has been, our local Workforce Investment Board, known as the Colusa County One-Stop Partnership. Almost 30% of our Welfare to Work Employment Services allocation is earmarked for our contract with that agency. The One-Stop provides the majority of our federal work participation opportunities through their Work Experience program, through job placements, and through Job Search and Job Readiness instruction. They also provide the *Choices* series of classes, which provides valuable soft-skills development, as well as computer literacy instruction daily (job skills directly related to employment), GED instruction daily, ESL instruction, and Adult Basic Education on a daily basis. Contracts between DHHS and the One-Stop are developed, modified, and renewed annually and conform to confidentiality and civil rights requirements. Releases of Information are included in both DHHS and One-Stop intake appointments with clients. Inter-agency case managers' meetings conform to Multi-Disciplinary Team confidentiality standards.

New Policies: Inter-agency Team approach to case management, Paid WEX, *Choices* soft-skills classes (includes components in parenting, substance abuse, emotional health, family violence), *Work Bucks* client incentives, staff development

Revised and Expanded Programs: Inter-Agency Case Managers' Meetings, computer literacy labs (expanded to daily), ABE/GED labs (expanded to daily)

Behavioral Health Services

New Policies: A Behavioral Health Services professional is a presenter for several weekly sessions of our new *Choices* curriculum. Her approach is to engage clients via parenting instruction. Discussions center on child-rearing problems, substance abuse use and prevention with respect to clients' children, effects of family violence on children, and the effects of clients' experiences with their parents' poor parenting/substance abuse/family violence/emotional problems.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Behavioral Health Services which addresses confidentiality and civil rights requirements. Releases of Information with clients are secured by both DHHS and BHS.

Expanded/Enhanced Policy: The BHS case manager is a full participant in Inter-Agency Case Managers' meetings.

Regional Occupational Program

Our County Office of Education's R.O.P. provides classes in Cashier/Checker Lab, which, given our demographics (I-5 corridor fast food/mini-part businesses), is very successful. They also provide a Business/Office Education curriculum, which provides marketable employment skills for Welfare to Work clients seeking entry into clerical positions in the county.

Releases of Information are included in both DHHS and R.O.P. intake appointments with clients. Inter-agency case managers' meetings conform to Multi-Disciplinary Team confidentiality standards.

New Policy: R.O.P. is included in the Inter-Agency Case Managers' Meetings.

Adult Education

Colusa County Office of Education is the sole provider of adult education in Colusa County. Computer instruction through Adult Ed is offered at area high schools, as is English-as-a-Second Language. Releases of Information are secured by both DHHS and the Office of Education upon clients' enrollment so that Attendance Reports can be provided.

Universities

Chico State University and Sacramento State University are the only public four-year campuses within a 150-mile radius of Colusa County. The minimum distance for Colusa area students attending Chico State is approximately 55 miles; distances increase for students living in our county's west side. Sacramento State is

at least 65 miles from Colusa County. Neither of these institutions provides a realistic or viable resource for our clients.

Yuba Community College

Colusa County-based community college classroom opportunities are essentially non-existent and have been for several years. The One-Stop Partnership, however, now houses an outreach worker from the Woodland campus, who primarily facilitates financial aid for county students attending that institution. Web-based instruction through the Marysville campus is also available at the One-Stop. Although fairly unfamiliar with the Welfare to Work program, the Woodland College outreach worker attended our interagency TANF Reauthorization Kick-Off meeting and appears interested in working with us. She is a new collaborator, having first met us in November, 2006; we feel she offers a resource well worth developing. Distance to Woodland College poses a challenge – for most of our county's residents, it is approximately 50 miles away – which we will work to meet in the coming months. Our goal is to develop vocational education and work-study opportunities for our clients.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

The Colusa County One-Stop Partnership has been an active, very helpful partner for Colusa's Welfare to Work program. We anticipate this partnership to provide the most effective outcomes, both qualitatively and quantitatively. We particularly anticipate increased client participation in Welfare to Work activities as an outcome of our *Team* approach to case management. We anticipate that 95% of our Welfare to Work clients and their families will be affected by our *Team* approach, which includes our department's Employment and Training Workers, the One-Stop's counselors, Behavioral Health Services counselors, and R.O.P. instructors. We anticipate that vocational education and work-study through the Yuba Community College District will serve approximately 1% of our Welfare to Work clients.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Our small Welfare to Work population and our small staffing level (two Employment and Training Workers) preclude categorical separation of Early Engagement, Re-Engagement, and Sanction Reduction strategies. Please also refer to Section H, below.

3) Plan to measure quarterly progress

Please describe how the county will measure the extent to which cumulative policies or strategies in the Plan addendum are successful, and how the county will measure progress on a quarterly basis (for example, participation rate of a specific population, sanction rate, orientation show rate, etc.). In addition, include the projected cumulative impact the county's policies or strategies will likely have on the county's federal work participation rate for each year of the next three years (for example, current rate of X will be increased to Y).

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress

Measures of quarterly progress:

Administratively, we are starting a statistical division of clients' activities into three components: Early Engagement, Re-Engagement, and Sanction Reduction. Activity Reports for each client will be tabulated accordingly.

Quantitative assessment will be determined by a simple count of Attendance Reports. For clients' unsubsidized employment hours, we will initially enter data from their monthly *Declaration of Hours* documents,

verifying this data from paycheck stubs provided to Eligibility Workers and from data matches, including the *Work Number*. ETWs will document their qualitative assessments of each client – assessments will be developed in weekly Inter-Agency Case Manager meetings in which Welfare to Work, One-Stop, Behavioral Health, and R.O.P. case managers rate and track the progress each client is making. These staffings, formerly focused on early engagement, now pertain to all phases of engagement and re-engagement. Quarterly summaries will be reviewed by Health and Human Services and One Stop supervisors and managers.

Projected impact on county's federal WPR:

We project an improved federal WPR of 10% by January, 2008, with increases of 5% per year for the next succeeding two years; i.e., through January, 2010, primarily attributable to expanding our Work Experience program to include Paid Work Experience sites.

4) Funding

Describe how the county has spent and plans to utilize single allocation and other funding for the county's CalWORKs program. This section will help explain to county and State stakeholders how increased funding will be used.

We rely on our Single Allocation to fund our CalWORKs and Welfare to Work programs; additional mental health and substance abuse funds are utilized for those services for our WtW clients.

Program Component	Fiscal Year 2005-06 Actual Expenditures	Fiscal Year 2006-07 Budgeted Amount	Description of how additional funding provided in Fiscal Year 2006-07 will be used
CalWORKs Eligibility Administration	\$259,405	\$174,627	n/a
WTW Employment Services	\$526,556	\$640,375	Increase in services provided through One-Stop contract expansion, which includes implementing the <i>Work Bucks</i> program, the <i>Choices</i> curriculum, and Paid WEX worksites
CalWORKs Child Care	\$ 51,321	\$ 52,024	Increased child care expenditures arising from increased client participation in WtW activities will essentially be offset by efforts late in FFY 2005-06 to more appropriately use Stage 2 child care. Should the offset be insufficient, we will seek Child Care Reserve funds.
Cal-Learn	\$ 5,849	\$ 8,476	We will provide incentives for Cal-Learn clients to participate in ILP workshops provided by the Colusa County One-Stop Partnership.
CalWORKs Funded	\$ 12,216	\$ 19,947	Increased client participation in

Mental Health Services			BHS-sponsored classes in parenting and women's support groups
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services		\$ 9,764	Instruction provided in the <i>Choices</i> curriculum; increased participation in Inter-Agency Case Managers' meetings.